

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-20

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR OAS UK

SUBJECT: OAS: BRITISH OBSERVERSHIP APPLICATION

REF: STATE 218108

1. THE OAS PREPARATORY COMMITTEE ON NOVEMBER 9 VOTED TO INCLUDE GREAT BRITAIN'S APPLICATION FOR OAS OBSERVER STATUS ON THE DRAFT AGENDA OF THE NEXT SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. DESPITE OPPOSITION OF ARGENTINA, GUATEMALA AND VENEZUELA, THE VOTE WAS SURPRISINGLY LOP-SIDED, 19-3 WITH ONE ABSTENTION ON THE PROCEDURAL MATTER OF THE COMPETENCE OF THE PREPCOM TO INSCRIBE AND 20-2-1 FOR ACTUAL INSCRIPTION.

2. THE FIRST PROCEDURAL VOTE AROSE OVER THE QUESTION OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHETHER BRITAIN'S APPLICATION WAS PENDING FROM LAST YEAR

(IN WHICH CASE IT COULD BE INSCRIBED BY THE PREPCOM) OR WAS NEW (AND WOULD HAVE TO BEGIN ANEW IN THE PERMANENT COUNCIL).

3. ARGENTINA AND GUATEMALA OPPOSE BRITISH OBSERVERSHIP BECAUSE OF THEIR TERRITORIAL DISPUTES WITH BRITAIN, AND VENEZUELA OPPOSES IT BECAUSE OF THE BRITISH HISTORIC ROLE IN ITS BORDER DISPUTE WITH GUYANA. ON THE PROCEDURAL QUESTION ONLY THE THREE AGGRIEVED STATES VOTED NO; EL SALVADOR ABSTAINED. ON THE QUESTION OF INSCRIPTION ARGENTINA AND VENEZUELA VOTED NO AND GUATEMALA ABSTAINED.

4. GUATEMALA'S DELEGATE WAS OBSTENSIBLY VERY MODERATE, PERHAPS IN RECOGNITION OF OVERWHELMING OPPOSITION. HE SAID HE FAVORED INSCRIPTION AND DISCUSSION OF THE MATTER ON ITS MERITS IN THE GA. BUT HE DENIED THAT THERE WAS A PENDING APPLICATION. HE SAID HIS ABSTENTION ON THE SECOND VOTE WAS BASED ON THE WORDING OF THE MOTION. ARGENTINA WAS THE MOST VOCAL AND STRIDENT OPPONENT OF INSCRIPTION, PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THE TIMING OF THE MEASURE. THE ARGENTINE DELEGATE SAID THE FALKLANDS QUESTION HAD BEEN REVIVED IN THE UN. (THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER REVISED THE QUESTION IN HIS SPEECH BEFORE THE UNGA OCT. 3. THE BRITISH RESPONDED, NOT VERBALLY, BUT BY A LETTER WHICH WAS MADE A UN DOCUMENT.)

5. THE AGENDA MUST NOW BE APPROVED IN FINAL FORM BY THE PREPCOM, AS WELL AS BY TWO-THIRDS VOTE OF ALL MEMBERS AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THEN, OF COURSE, THE MATTER MUST BE DETERMINED ON ITS MERITS BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BY A MAJORITY VOTE OF ALL MEMBERS. WE EXPECT FURTHER FIREWORKS OVER BOTH PROCEDURE AND SUBSTANCE AT EACH STEP AND SUSPECT GUATEMALA WILL MASTERMIND THE OPPOSITION. RUSH

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